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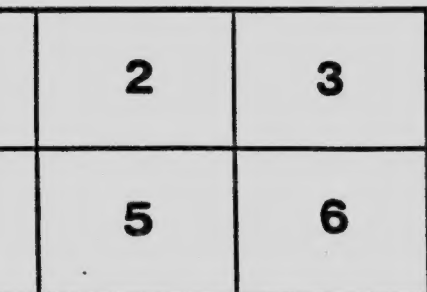
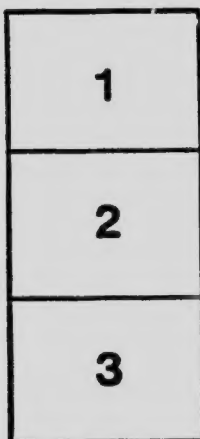
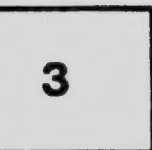
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MILLENIALISM

AND SOME OF ITS FALLACIES

By
REV. J. D. FITZPATRICK



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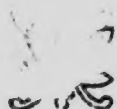
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PREFACE

The question of the Millenium, is greatly perplexing a number of good and earnest people these days. Devoted and conscientious pastors find that members of their churches are being unsettled or led into fanaticism. The following lecture was prepared for the Theological Union of the Hamilton Conference. It does not aim to be academic and the limits of time and space forbid its being exhaustive. The desire of the author was rather to be practical and suggestive, so as to assist his brother ministers in their pastoral work. When read before the Theological Union, it was most enthusiastically received, and a committee, composed of Rev. G. W. Henderson, D.D., chairman of the Brantford District, Rev. J. Edgar Todd, B.A., of Niagara Falls, Secretary of the Theological Union, and the author, was appointed to see to the publication and circulation of it.

The first edition of this unpretentious booklet having been exhausted within the limits of the Hamilton Conference, and believing there is a wider field for its usefulness, this second issue is sent forth with the continued hope and prayer that it may be of service to the Master.

J. D. FITZPATRICK.

NOV 2 1950

MILLENIALISM

AND SOME OF ITS FALLACIES

The Millenium, real or figurative, has always been the ideal of the Christian Church. Before the time of Christ, the ideal of Israel was the coming of the Messiah and his messianic reign. The Old Testament writers, who pointed to the coming one, were the preachers and poets of their time. In days of gloom and despair, when Israel was oppressed and enslaved, when it appeared that the foes of the chosen people had completely triumphed, and Jehovah had forgotten, these messengers came to inspire with new hope and promise. In great outburst of oratory, in grand poetic language, in vivid pictures brilliant with coloring, these men pointed to a better day when God's promised Messiah would come and bring the world new hope. And these men, prophets, poets, apocalyptists never dreamed that their figures and descriptions would be taken literally and mechanically. **For mark you this, it was the literal, materialistic interpretation of these great prophetic utterances, by the religious leaders of the day, that blinded the eyes of the people to the Messiahship of Jesus, and led them to crucify Him.**

Among the New Testament preachers and writers were poets and apocalyptists too. In striking pictures they portray, with startling vividness or fantastic grotesqueness, the evils of the world, the woes of the church, and the history of their day, and in beautiful strains of poetry they strike responsive chords of music in the believing heart. But alas, a num-

ber of people, some claiming to be leaders of the religious life, overlook the poetry and the picture, and like their types of old, whom they so roundly denounce, seek to reduce the imagery and music to a problem in mathematics, or a set of rules in syntax.

**A
Thousand
Years**

The whole theory of Millennialism centres round the phrase "a thousands years" used in Revelation, 20. This is regarded as a literal, definite period of one thousand years, in which Satan is to be bound, and Christ and His saints to reign. How this figurative language came to be reduced to a cold, literal, time-calculated period, is described by Dr. David Smith, in *The British Weekly*, of December 6, 1917. He says:—"Its genesis is interesting. History is a succession of 'ages,' periods, or stages, in the developmen' of the race, and the early Christian imagination, starting from the Jewish notion that the world was only some 4000-5000 years old when the Saviour came, saw in the story of creation a programme of the future, and mapped out the history of the world into six ages corresponding to the six days of creation. The first, according to St. Augustine, was from Adam to the flood, the second from Noah to Abraham, the third from Abraham to David, the fourth from David to the Babylonian Captivity, the fifth from the Captivity to the Saviour's birth, and the sixth from the Saviour's birth to the end of the world. And just as the six days of creative toil were followed by a day of rest, so the six ages will be followed by the Millennium, a thousand year . . . peace. Then the idea arose that each age hitherto had lasted a thousand years; and thus when the year 1000 A.D. approached, the belief prevailed that the

end of the world was imminent. The effect was curious. Many made over their property to the church, and not a few betook themselves to the Holy Land, the supposed scene of the Lord's visible return; but most were stricken with despair and abandoned themselves to revelry and excess."

**Other
Terms**

A slight glance at other terms used in this 20th chapter of Revelation, makes the literal theory of one thousand years appear somewhat strange. An angel has a "key," and a "great chain." No one believes these were literal, a brass or iron key, a bronze or steel chain. There was a "dragon" which was Satan, of course not a literal dragon, around whose neck and tail this chain was tied. There was a "bottomless pit," which cannot be literal, for a literal pit must have a bottom. And when this chained dragon was thrown into this bottomless pit, where he must keep falling so long as he is in it, he is sealed with a "seal." A wax or clay seal could scarcely be meant, though the only kind known to the writer in his day, and it seems curious that a seal should be attached to a dragon who is falling continually for a thousand years. This, of course, appears very ridiculous. But, I ask, if the key, and the chain, and the dragon, and the seal, and the bottomless pit are not literal, is not a little singular that the term "a thousand years" should be?

**Other
Figures**

But apart from the chapter itself, a little reading of the advocates of millennialism will show that no other set of figures in the whole Book of Revelation is taken literally but this thousand years. The figure "seven" so often used does not mean seven, but is the number

of perfection. These messages in the book were not merely to the seven churches in Asia, as is stated in 1: 4, but are to all churches during all the centuries. And the seven "stars" and "candlesticks," which are said to be the "angels" of the churches, and the "churches" themselves, are not just seven, but all the ministers and all the churches. And the "seven spirits of God" does not mean seven spirits, but the Holy Spirit.

The same is true of the number twelve, which is the number of completeness, so they say. The "twelve tribes" mean not Israel, but all the saved through Christ. And the "twelve gates" do not mean literally twelve gates, but complete opportunity of entrance.

The number "six hundred and sixty-six" is the number of a man. Not a man with 666 marked on him, tattooed or branded, but the symbol of some man. And a multitude of fanciful and ingenious interpretations, as you know, have been the result. Ignatius said it was "Lateinos," a name common in his day, and believed it referred to Rome, the Latin kingdom, which was showing signs of decay. Some have worked it out to mean Nero, others have applied it to Domitian, while Mohammed, Luther, Napoleon, the Pope, William of Orange, and others have been specified. And now, among all the other epithets of hatred and disgrace applied to Kaiser Wilhelm II this number 666 is added. The working out of this mysterious number and others has sometimes been very clever and often quite laughable. For it is wonderful how you can juggle with numbers and figures and names. Some time ago the evil combination of the Kaiser and his allies was pointed out, and the superstitious opinion expressed

that they could not win the war because the sum of the letters in the names of each was thirteen. Kaiser Wilhelm; Francis Joseph; Czar Ferdinand; Sultan Mahmed V.—And the great military heroes of Germany belong to the same class—Count Zeppelin, Von Falkenhayn, Von Hindenburg.—How could the Kaiser expect to win with such a handicap? Another excellent illustration of the same method of exposition is to be found in attributing the 46th Psalm to Shakespeare, whose name is craftily hidden in it. It is the 46th Psalm, the 46th word in it is “shake,” and the 46th word from the end of it is “spear.” Laugh if you will.

But even the compounds of one thousand in the book are not to be taken too literally. 144,000 does not mean 144,000, but a large number; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, mean an innumerable host; though it need only mean 104,000,000 which in these days is not innumerable. But one thousand years means just one thousand years. Can anyone explain by what law of reason or of faith, any such method of interpretation can be justified?

Christ Did Not Know There are other facts to be borne in mind in connection with Millenium. Christ during His ministry knew nothing about it, or if He knew He was significantly silent. Why, if this definite period is such an important factor in the “plan of the ages” did Jesus not speak? Nor did Paul know anything about it. This great church leader and preacher, the man upon whose writings so much of our New Testament theology is based, never mentions the thousand years. In fact the only mention of a thousand years in the New Testament.

apart from this passage in the Revelation, is in 2 Peter, 3: 8, where he says: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." And Peter is no doubt reflecting the statement of Psalm 90: 4. "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past." If this one thousand years is literal it seems hard to imagine that Jesus, and Paul, and James, and Peter, and the writer to the Hebrews, and John in his three letters should all so carelessly or carefully have overlooked it.

Other Significant Statements Note one other strange inconsistency on the part of those who maintain a literal 1000 years. It is the way in which they juggle away other important and significant statements. The declaration in the introductory paragraph of the book that the things spoken of "must shortly come to pass" (1: 1) for "the time is at hand" (1: 3). And the statements in the concluding paragraphs where the writer insists upon the same thing, "the time is at hand" (22: 10) "and behold I come quickly" (22: 20). None of these terms, according to millennialists, mean what they say. "Shortly" does not mean shortly at all. "The time is at hand" does not mean that it was at hand. "I come quickly" does not mean quickly. Nearly 1900 years are gone since these words were written, and according to millennial teachers these events have not yet taken place, so these terms of immediateness must have meant at least 1900 years.

I know the answer of those who trifle away these terms which are so fundamental in any reasonable interpretation of the book. The millennialist insists that these terms "shortly," "at hand," and "quickly," meant that the

event was liable to happen at any time and that they were used so the church would always be ready. They are also made figurative and explained by the passage in Peter that a thousand years is with the Lord as only a day. My reply to the first is this,—If Christ knew 1900 years would intervene and used the terms “at hand,” “shortly,” and “quickly,” He did it to deceive, and I for one refuse to believe Christ would do that. My reply to the second is that if these terms are to be interpreted by the quotation “a thousand years with the Lord is as one day,” then all the terms lose their force, and the advocate of the thousand years cuts the ground from under his own feet. We would all believe it would be “shortly,” and “quickly” if the events referred to were accomplished in five months, or five years, in fact we might not regard the terms overdrawn if they referred to a period of twenty-five years. But if such periods might be considered “shortly,” and “at hand,” and are to be interpreted by the method of a thousand years being with the Lord only as a day, then five months would mean 150,000 years and twenty-five years would equal 9,125 milleniums. And thus the event may be hundreds of thousands of years in the distance. Yet we are urged to expect it in the immediate future.

Apocalyptic In any discussion of “The Revelation,” some mention should be made of Apocalyptic literature. My purpose not being scholarly but practical I refer to it very briefly. This class of writing, to which the Book of Revelation belongs, was prolific from about 200 B.C. to 150 A.D. Generally speaking it grew out of the apparently hopeless condition of Israel as a

nation, and was used to inspire them to look for better days in the future. It is highly figurative, full of symbolism, often wrought out with mathematical exactness, imaginative, and picturesque to a degree. An acquaintance with this literature is absolutely essential to any fair or honest interpretation of such books in either the Old or New Testament. The very interesting and authoritative article in Hasting's "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels" is of great value if one has not the time to read the voluminous literature itself. But the most meagre acquaintance with Apocalyptic must change our whole viewpoint, estimate, and interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

Summary To summarize then regarding a Millenium we have the term "A Thousand Years" made the foundation of a doctrine. This term is taken literally, while every other term in its immediate connection is plainly figurative. This number is declared to be specific, while every other number in the book is considered symbolic. This term means an exact period while such terms as "shortly," "quickly," and "at hand," mean 1900 years or more. And this Millenium term, so definite and distinct, and authoritative, comes from a type of literature that surpasses all other types in its imagery and symbolism. I leave you to judge if any more uncertain or illogical foundation could be found upon which to build a structure of faith and conduct.

Theories of Doctrine Around this idea of Millenium has grown two branches of belief. One, termed Pre-Millennial, insists that the coming of Christ a second

time is to be personal, in bodily form, and is to precede and usher in this thousand years. The other is termed Post-Millennial and regards the thousand years as the age of Gospel triumph, when the world will be won to Christ, to be followed by His return to judgment and the end of the world. To these two classes may be added a third, an ever growing class I imagine, who have no theory of millennial reign, but seek to do the will of God and obey the commandment of Christ for the world's evangelization and christianization, and leave the final order of events to the wisdom and Fatherly Providence of God. This third class having no theories have no fads or fallacies regarding the matter unless their whole attitude is false. The so-called Post-Millennialists are also not greatly perplexed, or troubled, or inspired, or affrighted, by a multitude of details of action and time-table that centres round a millenium. For them it will be time enough, if necessary, to arrange or calculate that programme when the millenium has arrived. But the Pre-Millennialists are in a different position. Since this Millenium is to be preceded by the personal and bodily appearance of the Christ, Who will usher it in, they are greatly concerned with all the evidence, and preliminary steps leading up to, and bringing to actuality, this glorious age. These believers insist that God has a definite time-table and schedule upon which He will run off the events of time. It is therefore perfectly natural that men should want to get hold of the time-table. With all the programme and its application I have not time to deal, but included in its theories are a number of conclusions contrary to fact and to the whole tenor and spirit of Scripture. With a very few of these I will deal.

SOME OF THE FALLACIES

1. **The Fallacy that the Gospel will not save the world, and that the world is growing worse and worse.** With that belief both the facts of history and the teachings of the New Testament are directly opposed. We must admit that evil is rampant in the world, but it is not more rampant than ever since the time of Christ. The good does not control and spread its beneficence over all the life of man, we are free to confess, but never was it so prevalent or so much in evidence as to-day.

**Civilized
and
Savage**

Civilized man to-day is far from being perfect in either morals or religious life, but he is an infinitely higher type of man, and lives a vastly nobler life than the savage and pagan. I recognize the sad shock to boasted civilization which has come through German atrocities and barbarism. But I remind you that the German is not the highest type of Christian civilization, though for the time being a small, dominating Prussian faction may think so. Even Japan and China frown on Germany. And yet I call your attention to this fact, that Germany has committed no outrage, no atrocity, no barbarism, that was not universal in Africa, in India, in the South Sea Islands, yea even in China and Japan for all the centuries, and even within the last fifty years. Germany, I believe, represents lowest type of Christian civilization in the world to-day; she has the most unchristian Christian civilization, but even such civilization as Germany represents is quite equal to, if not superior to that of Rome 1800 or 1900 years ago. Germany is

the lowest to-day and Rome was the highest in her day. And even what Roman civilization there was in that day was confined to a comparatively small area of the Empire itself, and all the great outside was heathen and pagan. Even the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain were naked savages, almost, if not quite as low in morals, as bloodthirsty, and as cruel, as the Polynesians of fifty years ago. The Christianity and civilization of the early centuries of our era may be judged from this statement of Ridpath in his "History of the World," Volume II, page 338. "In the year 404 the priests declared that cruelty was no part of the Christian system—except, of course, when practised against the enemies of Christ."

France, Here is Harold Begbie's de-
1200 A.D. scription of France in the
thirteenth century:—"There were no drains in those days. The trodden mud of the road, where pigs and dogs hunted for food, was indescribably horrible. The atmosphere of the city reeked with evil odors. Paris could be smelt for miles before it was reached. People who washed once a week thought themselves extraordinarily clean. The corridors, staircases, and even the rooms of castles and palaces were like stables. **Decency did not exist.** The fork was not invented; everyone, from king to beggar, ate with their hands on a bare table and sucked their fingers afterwards. The poor starved. The rich stuffed themselves to apoplexy. Conversation was coarse and boastful. Priest, monk, and nun, for the most part, were given over to wickedness. Everywhere it was the same. **Some of the men who had been to the Crusades declared that the Moslem was a**

better man and a cleaner animal than the Christian.—(The Distant Lamp. page 5-6.)

England, 1750 A.D. Here is a picture of England in the time of Wesley, written by Green the historian:—"Of the prominent statesmen of the time the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives. Drunkenness and foul talk were thought no discredit to Walpole. A later Prime Minister, the Duke of Grafton, was in the habit of appearing with his mistress at the play. Purity and fidelity to the marriage vow were sneered out of fashion; and Lord Chesterfield in his letters to his son instructs him in the art of seduction as part of a polite education. At the other end of the social scale lay the masses of the poor. They were ignorant and brutal to a degree which it is hard to conceive, for the increase of population which followed on the growth of towns and the development of commerce had been met by no effort for their religious or educational improvement. The rural peasantry, who were fast being reduced to pauperism by the abuse of the poor laws, were left without much moral or religious training of any sort. Within the towns things were worse. In the streets of London at one time gin shops invited every passer-by to get drunk for a penny, or dead drunk for two pence."—(Green's Shorter History, page 736.)

Then And Now Harry F. Wood, in "World Outlook," May, 1916, page 3, says: — "When the Black Plague swept London 250 years ago the rich ran away and left the poor to rot. Now people of wealth and ease travel far to regions

infected with loathsome diseases, some to nurse the afflicted, and others to fight the disease. They die for folk they have never seen before, and count it but a part of the day's work." And that could be illustrated in hundreds of thousands of cases, as you know.

I know that to-day one-half of the human race is unable to read or write a word of any language, and that more than one-half the race is without a knowledge of medicine, surgery or sanitation. But if this is the condition to-day, what was it one hundred years ago? What about reforms in foreign lands? Anti-footbinding in China and opium prohibition. The abolition of the suttee and juggernaut in India. These hoary, age-long iniquities have fled or are fleeing before the Christian civilization of to-day. As Mr. Brewer Eddy points out in "World Outlook," May, 1916, page 26: "In mighty chorus the slave, the captive, the fallen, the sick, the insane, the imprisoned, the orphan, all 'these least' of a needy world, raise their voices of praise for the work of mercy and of Christian love accomplished the world around by the missionary, the scout of civilization." And the chorus is louder and more harmonious than ever before in this world's history.

Here is the admission of a Pre-Millennialist writing to prove the world is growing worse. He says:—"But can it be that moral conditions are really worse than they have ever been; that the glittering twentieth century is more deeply sunken in vice than the first or second when pagan Rome revelled in her saturnalia of crime and corruption? Perhaps no one would insist on that conclusion directly—but *relatively*, when the opportunities of each age are taken into consideration—then no Bible, no churches, no

preached word in any general sense; now all these and more—, how stands the account?" (C. C. Cook, "Bible Outlines on the Second Coming," page 10.) How stands the account? Why just this way: If the good had not been increasing, and increasing more rapidly than the bad, and exercising an ever widening and powerful influence, there could have been no **relatively**, of which this writer speaks. This is the very thing for which we contend.

The most specious argument I have read to prove the world is growing worse is that briefly stated by Van Osdel and quoted by C. C. Cook in his "Brief Outlines on the Second Coming," page 11. This is it:—"The vital question is this: is the proportionate percentage of persons becoming sons of God by faith in Christ, greater than the increase in population? If so, the world is getting better, but if not it is getting worse." That statement may look well at first glance. It settles the whole question with a brush of the hand. It is on a par with most other pre-millennial argument concerning the same subject, and its conclusion is false. Whether it is a fact that the increase of population in the world is greater than the number becoming sons of God in Christ may be hard to state. The figures or statistics are not available. But if it is so, that is not final.

**Did
Jesus
Fail?**

It took Jesus about three years to gather a little handful of very weak followers, and when

He ascended there were probably not more than a couple of hundred at most that would acknowledge themselves as His. How miserably He failed then according to this argument, for I doubt not there were as many born into the world (and that

almost exclusively a heathen and pagan world) during those three years as were born into it last year. The probability is there were many more. Last years' additions to the church ran into millions, but the birth rate was likely about the same. If the world was getting worse last year, it must have been getting worse 5000 times as fast in the time of Christ. If you are going to compare the growth of the church with the increase of world population to estimate the goodness or badness of the world, then you must compare these statistics at two periods of history, and judge whether the church is gaining or losing ground, and whether the outlook is more or less hopeful for the world. However, the goodness or badness of the world does not depend upon the number of good or bad who are in it, but upon the comparative influence of the one or the other upon its life. And I am solemnly convinced that there never was a time when the Christian church, and the Christian spirit was so influential in the world as to-day. But if you have to be mechanical in your reasoning, then I submit that the figures of increase in the church and world population of 100 years ago and to-day would show the outlook better for the Christian Gospel at this time by at least 10,000 per cent.

100	One hundred years ago what
Years'	Christianity there was in the
Progress	world was confined to the
	British Isles and Europe. And

judged by the standard laid down by Christ, "a tree is known by its fruits," it was certainly not as spiritual, or as moral, or as alive to its opportunity to serve as it is to-day even on that continent alone. And during

the century it has spread over North America, across China, over India. It has brought light to the Dark Continent, given Japan new ideals of moral and social life, and is beginning to make its influence felt for good in South America, the great Neglected Continent. And surely the prospect was never so bright for victory as now. Missionary leaders tell us that more has been accomplished, and larger results attained in the last 100 years than in the previous 1800, and that the last 20 were more productive than the previous 80. This certainly is true. In almost every mission land the missionaries labored for years without a single convert. Judged by comparison those years were utter failures and the lands were growing worse and worse. It was not so. They were foundation years, and sowing days, and from them noble structures have been built, and golden harvests gathered.

**Recent
Facts**

Here are a few statements gathered from "World Outlook," the organ of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, published in New York, and edited by Dr. S. Earl Taylor:—

"In six months, 7000 of the men who rule China, high officials, merchants, and literati, who hold the destiny of the Republic in their hands,—turned to Christianity." When John R. Mott first visited China he had an attendance at all his meetings of 2000, and this was considered wonderful in that day. Eighteen years later he returned, and more than that number attended his meetings every day, and thousands were organized into Bible Classes.

"In Korea the people are turning to Christ at the rate of 3000 per week. There has been

an average of one convert for every hour since the missionaries first went there, over 28 years ago. Now they are averaging 18 converts per hour. (March, 1915.)

"The Christian community of India has been increasing at the rate of 5000 new members every month, or 30,000 per year." Bishop Warne wrote the Board of the M.E. Church that if they would give him the financial assistance necessary they could add 2,000,000 converts in 4 years. (March, 1915.) (July, 1915.)

"In Uganda there are 1200 Christian Churches, where 25 years ago there was only one." (March, 1915.)

I might also mention the great evangelistic campaign which has been sweeping Japan for the past five years. The 21 missionaries of our church there call for help. Mr. Whiting in last year's Missionary Report (page L) tells of a revival on his field at Nagano, led by Mr. Kanamori, when in five weeks 1750 decided to be followers of Christ.

And we are still only laying foundations for the evangelization of the world, and only preparing the ground or sowing the seed. We are yet to see the structure that will be reared and the harvest that will be gathered. And the church had never greater reason to sing, or to pray—

Blest river of salvation
Pursue thine onward way,
Flow thou to every nation
Nor in thy richness stay.
Stay not till all the lowly
Triumphant reach their home,
Stay not till all the holy
Proclaim the Lord is come.

2. **Another Fallacy of Pre-Millennialism is its Fatalism.** That God from eternity laid down a programme, and that He will carry it out to the letter. The statement reiterated again and again is: "God has a plan." That sounds well, but before you accept it consider what it means. I can only deal with one phase here. Pre-millennial writers and preachers are quite bold enough to say that God never intended to save the world in this dispensation, because it is not in His plan. The whole teaching implies that God planned for failure in six dispensations in order that He might gloriously triumph in the seventh. Let who will believe it, God is no such fiend or trickster as that.

That God never intended to save the world in this dispensation, but only to gather out a few select and elect who would appear with Him in glory to reign in a Millennium, and share in the final triumph, is bald Calvinism gone on the rampage. Think what it implies. Jesus suffered and died not to save the world, but just some in the world. The apostles were commissioned to go out and preach, not to save the world, but just to "evangelize" it; and evangelize with pre-millennial advocates means just to give them a bare chance to be saved. But God never intended them to be saved. In fact the assertion is quite clear and emphatic that the Gospel is just to be preached as "a witness," so that when the judgment comes those who have not accepted Christ will be without excuse, and God can condemn them to eternal burning by saying, "well you heard the Gospel and had a chance and did not take it."

This is their doctrine, and personally I thank God they nearly all are much better than their creed. To their credit be it said,

they pray, and work, and sacrifice for missionary endeavor, and to meet the needs of men, but it is not to their creed they owe the inspiration. A few cases are exceptions, however, for they candidly acknowledge they do it not in hope of saving men, but so they may save themselves, and, of course, if that is why it is done, it is as selfish as the Devil himself, and as open to condemnation.

The statement that God never intended to save the world in this dispensation is monstrous. It contradicts both the spirit and letter of the Gospel. To "evangelize" the world means vastly more than simply to give mankind a mere chance to have his soul saved. Listen to the solemn and comprehensive words of the great commission given by Mark, (16: 15) "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to **every** creature." This is further emphasized in detail as recorded by Matthew (28: 19-20), "Go ye therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you**, and lo I am with you unto the"—Millenium?—No; "**end of the world!**" Surely making disciples means saving them, while teaching all things He commanded is an enormous task that can only be accomplished by great patience and devotion through multitudes of years. We with several generations of Christian ancestry have much yet to learn of the teachings of Jesus, especially as it bears upon the social relations of life.

**God
Not A
Mocker**

If God never intended to save the world in this dispensation, how sadly and bitterly He has mocked man. Jesus said: "For

God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him should be saved," John 3: 17. But He did not mean that; in fact, the very opposite is true. He knew He would not save the world, and He came just to condemn it. One day, as you remember, He wept over Jerusalem, and He said: "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." Matt. 23: 37. But He did not mean it, He never intended to gather her children together. Or listen again to words of His: "And I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me," John 12: 32, and the evangelist is careful to tell us that He spoke of the "death He should die." If He died on the cross He would draw all unto Him. But He did not mean it. He never intended to draw them by His cross in this dispensation, but has planned to bring them by power when He comes on a throne! Our pre-millennial teachers somehow hush up such a text as this or limit its truth and scope to a certain confined circle. It is only the "elect," a "remnant," who will be saved by the cross. Hear this prayer written by a most prolific preacher and tractarian of this cult: "Accomplish O Lord the number of thine elect. Get through the preaching of Thy Gospel those who shall be eternally Thine, because eternally chosen of Thee."—Haldeman, "Is the Coming of Christ Before or After the Millenium?" page 75. Surely this is predestination run mad.

Is This Our Christ? According to Pre-Millennialists Christ is to accomplish the saving of the world, not by "grace," nor by the cross, in this dispensation, but by power, and a throne, when He reigns with a rod of iron over the earth. In fact, one could almost imagine these Bible teachers had studied at the feet of Prussian Militarism, so terrible are the pictures they draw of Christ as He comes to lord it over the earth. Here is the picture drawn by Dr. I. M. Haldeman, in his book above referred to, pages 63, 64, 65. "The door in Heaven is now flung wide open and the Son of God comes forth. He is riding on a white horse. —Behind Him there ride other horsemen. They are the saints of God, the redeemed of the Lord. There are tens of thousands and ten times thousands of thousands of the angels of God who accompany them.—Those eyes are blazing now." (i.e., the eyes of Jesus.) "Their glances flash forth as when lightnings pierce the dark and fetid cloud—.

"They reveal, they make manifest every secret thought and hidden deed. They scorch. They burn. They wither and consume all that is unclean, unrighteous, and untrue. He is coming to tread the wine press. He is coming to tread it alone* The wine press is the earth, the earth in Palestine. **The grapes are the bodies of men. The juice as it bursts forth and runs red beneath His feet, a red that is a deep, dark red, is the blood of the arteries of men. And this blood will run a stream sixteen hundred furlongs in length.** He is coming not with an olive branch, but with a rod of iron. He is coming, not to

* What He has done with all the saints and thousands of angels the writer does not explain, but Pre-Millennialists are not troubled about consistency.

touch the earth as softly as a kiss on upturned and waiting lips. Nay not with a kiss is He coming, but to smite the earth which gave Him a cross of wood, a crown of thorns, and a borrowed grave. He has not forgotten and the earth shall terribly remember."

I know of no other picture of horror, so realistic, and so materialistic except it is Dante's Inferno. Only one thing remains to be added to make it perfect in its infamy: "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus." And I doubt not the author could pray that prayer with sanctified delight.

God's Plan

I want to add **God has a plan.** That is clear all through the records of sacred truth.

It is a plan of love, of great, heart-breaking, fatherly love. But His plan has been broken, because He gave man the power of self determination. His plan for Adam was that he should always remain in the garden, but Adam sinned and thwarted God's plan. He had a plan for Israel. He tells them so. He said: "I have set before you life and death, choose life." Deut. 30: 19. But they chose death, and His plan was broken. Then in love He gave Jesus to die on Calvary, the just for the unjust, that all men might be reconciled unto God through Him. That, so far as I can learn from Scripture is His final plan, and it is an all sufficient one. Many will reject it, but it will finally succeed. It may take centuries, or milleniums to do it, but it never can be superseded. It is the cross of Christ that must save the world and will, for Himself said: "And I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." John 12: 32. And may I add, if God cannot save the world by love, the love and sacrifice of

Christ on the cross, He never can save it by power. He may crush His enemies by power, but He must win His friends by love. That was why the great apostle said to the Corinthians: "I determined not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." 1 Cor. 2: 2. And the writer to the Hebrews is assured with this hope for he says: "We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Heb. 2: 28-9.

3. The Motive for Obedience and Service put forth by Pre-Millennialism is not the highest. The appeal is "be ready, for Christ may appear in the heavens at any moment and find you unprepared." This motive may be of value to some, but it certainly will not appeal to, nor produce the best. It is what has sometimes been called the "policeman motive," the method of fear, frightening one into obedience.

Shirker or Worker Even the motive of expectancy, and being ready on that account, is not the highest. It may be the refuge of the shirker or the hypocrite. Careless and indolent laborers are the personification of industry and interest when the boss is expected. The noblest laborer is he who will toil with fidelity and honor though the boss never appear to either command or blame. Dr. A. J. Gordon uses a beautiful and subtle illustration to emphasize this pre-millennial view. It is this: "Having gone into the country with my children for a few weeks' vacation, I had planned many pleasant diversions and engagements for the holidays, when

almost upon my arrival I was summoned back to the city on an important mission. In the disappointment of the children I said to them: 'Children, I am going to the city to-day, but I shall soon be back again. I may come to-morrow, or the next day, or possibly not till the end of the week, but you may expect me any time.' It so happened that I was detained until Saturday. But when I returned I learned that in their eagerness to welcome me back the children, contrary to their natural instinct, had insisted on having their faces washed every day and having on their clean clothes, and going down to meet me at train time." A beautiful illustration, life-like and natural, but subtle and inadequate. You see the children did not desire to be washed and cleanly clad, and we might infer that had they not expected him they would have been content to go without either washing or cleaning for the whole week. I very much doubt, however, if that would have pleased their mother, who was with them, and as much beloved as he. And why not get washed and cleaned up for mother's sake? For the mother who was there?

A young woman whose mother is dead, keeps house for her father, and mothers, as best she can, the younger children. After a very busy day, which had greatly tired her, she heard that a neighbor was sick. She wrapped up a glass of jelly and prepared to make the sick visit after tea. But some one said: "Why do it to-night, you're very tired, wait till morning." And she replied: "O yes, I'm tired, but perhaps I can help just a little," and remembering her mother's kindness of heart and loving thought for others that so often had inspired her, continued, "and, you know, if mother was here, she

would do it." And that motive and attitude was vastly superior to the other. She was inspired by love to her mother, the sacred memory lingered in her life and sweetened her service. But, more important and more vital than that she had the same loving kindness and tender mercy in her heart as had possessed her mother.

Love
Must
Rule

And that is the crucial thing. The service which is highest and most Christ-like is that which arises from the indwelling of His Spirit in the heart. It is that expressed by John: "We love because He first loved us." 1 John 4: 19. It is that meant by Christ, "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4: 14. It is illustrated in the judgment-scene of Matt. 25: 34-40, where those on the right hand were welcomed and blessed for their kindness and ministry to others, which had been rendered solely through the promptings of His spirit, and without any thought of reward. Rest assured of this, Jesus must reign in the hearts of men or there will never be peace and righteousness in the world, and no autocratic power, not even that of Jesus Himself, can impose peace and righteousness by sitting on a material throne in Jerusalem or anywhere else. I say it reverently, if God could impose His peace and love in human hearts He would long ago have done it. He has not done it because love must be attracted, it cannot be forced.

1. These are days of very active propaganda by many who declare the imminence of a material coming of Christ, and a literal pro-

gramme of Millenium. Numerous signs are pointed to as proof that this outward event is near at hand. It suffices to say that no list of "signs" that I have seen are peculiarly or strikingly significant of this age. They would be applicable to any period of a quarter century almost since the time of Christ. The great war has given stimulus to the propaganda as have many great wars of the past. When Alaric, the Goth, captured and pillaged Rome, 409 A.D., some Christian writers declared it was the destruction of Babylon as portrayed in the Apocalypse, and that Christ's coming would swiftly follow. When Napoleon, a century ago, was marching his great armies over Europe and threatening the world, there was a revival of millennialism and the people were warned by all the signs that the time was at hand. When the great civil war of the neighboring Republic was ravaging this continent a half century ago the movement gathered great momentum and many sadly fanatic things were done. The Franco-Prussian War, the Spanish-American War, the South African War, the Russo-Japanese War, all gave occasion for insisting on the sign "wars and rumors of wars." And the present great war has made the smouldering embers to buist forth again into flame. I wonder if it is not time to remind ourselves of the statement of Christ Himself who said: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say Lo, here! or Lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."—Luke 17: 20-21.

Be

Patient

This is a time for patience, for calm, for self-possession. If only we will wait the war will pass, and 25 years from now, or less, the pro-

paganda will probably have spent its force. If only we are consecrated to God, loving Him intensely, and seeking as best we can to serve our fellows, all will be well. Christ has given us a great task, all our energies and resources are required to meet the need. A great world sadly and sorrowfully bleeds and suffers because it has not yet been taught the love of God.

**In
Japan**

A college friend of mine is one of our honored missionaries in Japan. On his last furlough he told me this: When he went to Japan some 25 years ago he met a fellow missionary on the boat who was an ardent Pre-Millennialist, and full of his subject. My friend was not greatly taken with him. But about six or seven years ago they met again at a missionary convention in Japan, were billeted together, and became fast friends. This other missionary had lost his zeal for his theory of Christ's second coming and dropped it. My friend asked him why. This was his reply:—"Well, Bro. N., you know when I came to Japan and saw so many thousands who did not know that Christ had come a first time, I concluded it was great folly to preach to them about His coming a second time."

**False
Prophets**

**Our Pre-Millennial theorists have
always misinterpreted the signs.**

Again, and again, and again, for the past 1900 years they have assured the church that the coming of Christ as they believed it was imminent, and that all the signs were in evidence. Again the church is regaled with the same assurance and the same list of signs. Have we any positive assurance that they are not wrong again. In-

terpreters of prophecy, before the prophecy has been fulfilled, have almost always misinterpreted.

Brethren, I confess to you, no theory of Millenium appeals to me. I have read scores of books, and tracts and pamphlets. I have read columns of texts, gathered from Genesis to Revelation, some of them appropriate, and most of them having no reference or bearing whatever on the subject, for texts are only of value as they are used in harmony with their context. I have also read my Bible. I have read it more than any of these other books. Personally I prefer to take my theology from it. And I believe that if God had desired to reveal His programme of the future He could have done it, and would have done it in such a clear and definite way that even one so dull as I am could have understood. But I absolutely refuse to believe that the Bible is a puzzle box for the most ingenious or imaginative to weave fantastic theories from. The following statement of Dr. A. S. Peake is appropriate and valuable:

Bible

No Puzzle

Box

“The Bible is not a book of puzzles. We must not degrade that glorious literature into a collection of ingenious conundrums. It was not given to humanity as a whetstone on which to sharpen its wits by propounding clever guesses in answer to obscure riddles. It was not the Divine intention that we should use the Bible as a pick-lock to force our way into those secrets of the times and seasons, the knowledge of which the Father has reserved to Himself alone. They present a melancholy spectacle who understand so little the true meaning of Scripture that their attention is concentrated

on prediction and apocalypse and who can find nothing better to do with the prophets than construct almanacs of future events out of their writings. Such speculations are intrinsically unprofitable.

"But even if this were not the case, the Bible is not patient of such a method of interpretation. The prophets were not concerned with a far distant history, and it would be to take our own concerns too seriously to imagine that their gaze was fixed with exceptional keenness of scrutiny on the opening years of the 20th century after Christ, or the changing conditions of the British Empire. And although there might seem to be more excuse for study of the apocalypses, yet even Daniel and the Book of Revelation are occupied with the fortunes of Israel or the Christian Church in their present and immediate future. Besides, these writings form a comparatively small part of Scripture, and those who turn their attention to the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls, to the beast, the false prophet, and the little horn, are neglecting what is vital and substantial for the trivial and fanciful. Happily the number who are preoccupied with such fantastic investigations is not large, and the suspicion with which a sturdy common sense has always regarded them is abundantly justified by the failure which invariably attends such forecasts. We may trust that the number of cranks and faddists who treat the Bible as a quarry for their own crochets will steadily diminish."—*The Bible, Its Origin, Significance, and Abiding Worth.* Page 408-409.

Jesus We know of the coming of
Is Christ. He came, as He says
Here Himself, to save the world.
 "I came not to judge the world,
 but to save the world," John 12: 47. He came
 to seek and save the lost. Luke 19: 10. He
 came that He might destroy the works of the
 Devil, 1 John 3: 8. And this task He has im-
 posed upon His followers, for He declared:
 "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I
 you," John 20: 21. And He is here now ac-
 cording to His promise: "Lo, I am with you
 always, **even unto the end of the world.**"
 Matt. 28: 20. And we have learned His
 power and sufficiency. He hath brought us
 up out of the mire and the clay, and hath set
 our feet upon a rock. He hath established
 our goings, and put a new song into our
 mouth, even praise unto the Most High. And
 He who has done this for us can do it for all
 the world. And He who has so graciously,
 and so gloriously saved us, will save the
 world. And He will save it in the same way
 He has saved us. For salvation is through
 repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus
 Christ. It is "the way of the cross" that
 leads home.

Lord I believe were sinners more
 Than sands upon the ocean shore,
 Thou hast for all atonement made
 For all a ransom freely paid.

O that the world might taste and see
 The riches of His grace,
 The arms of love that compass me
 Would all mankind embrace.



